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SOVIET CAPABILITIES AND PROBABLE COURSES OF ACTION
(NIE 11-4-54)

Observations from Propaganda Analysis

Sections I A 3 and II B

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Since September 1953 there had been indications that Chinese leaders were resisting Soviet efforts to have China assume the entire joint responsibility, at the expense of Chinese socialist industrialization, for the struggle against imperialism in Asia. This difference appears to be approaching a resolution favoring the Chinese stand, but the terms of the compromise are not at present entirely clear.

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The evidence from propaganda supports the conclusion that the USSR although concerned over Western aggressive plans, does not feel imminently threatened, and will pursue above all its effort to split the Western alliance.

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Soviet propaganda shows increased concern—not however approaching that evident in regard to the European Defense Community—over prospective Western success in creating a formal Middle East defense organization. A Soviet proposal for independent Middle East security arrangements is a possibility, but no propaganda groundwork for it has been laid.

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The Soviets were sufficiently disturbed by Secretary Dulles' 12 January speech to issue a unique veiled warning stressing Soviet retaliatory might. They seem to estimate that the United States would choose to use nuclear weapons if pressed, but to place some confidence in the reluctance of its allies to concur in such action.

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D. Sino-Soviet Relations (I A 3)*

Have there been any significant changes which have occurred in Sino-Soviet relations since Stalin's death? If so, what?

1. Beginning in September 1953, elite Soviet and Chinese statements were at variance about (a) the Chinese program for socialist industrialization and (b) China's leadership in the Asian struggle against imperialism. The Chinese insisted on "building socialism," not just "building a new life," as the Soviets would have it, on a program of austerity in the face of the Orbit "new course," and on Soviet participation in "stabilizing" the Far East, a task assigned by the Soviets to China.

2. These differences seem to reflect Chinese resistance to the Soviet view that China should devote more of its resources to fulfilling its international obligations than to pushing its internal program of socialist industrialization. They also imply Soviet reluctance to assume responsibility for the struggle against imperialism in the Far East, a reluctance which might be one of the motivating factors in the Soviet drive for international recognition of the CPR.

3. There have been indications since February 1954 of attempts to reconcile the formulae expressing these divergent views, and the Soviets now seem to have yielded in regard to Chinese socialist construction. With respect to Soviet participation in stabilizing the Far East, the present line is less clear. The March election speeches of Khrushchev and Molotov adopted the Chinese formula invoking the Sino-Soviet pact, but Malenkov's did not; and the Soviet May Day slogans avoid taking a stand by omitting the appropriate slogan. The Chinese at Geneva seem to be accepting the role of Asian leadership which the Soviets have so long pressed upon them.

Molotov (?) described Soviet role at Geneva as that of mediator.

* This section consists of the preliminary conclusions of a Radio Propaganda Report, "Sino-Soviet Differences on Responsibility for 'Stabilizing' the Far East," to be issued about 14 May 1954.

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E. U.S. Bases (II B 4) and Western Disunity (II C 1)

What is the Soviet estimate of probable political and economic developments in the West and the effects of those developments upon the cohesiveness of the Western Alliance? What is the Soviet estimate of the firmness of the Western Alliance?

What is the Soviet estimate of U.S. intentions with respect to the further development of its military base policy? Does the Soviet leadership really attribute aggressive intentions to this policy, and if so, does it believe that threat an imminent one?

That the USSR believes the United States intends to pursue its military base policy is indicated by the continued propaganda attention to U.S. plans, most recently and particularly in the Middle East and Southeast Asia and for the military encirclement of China. However, there are indications that this policy is not considered an imminent threat to the USSR or established members of the Orbit.

Propaganda in the post-Stalin period, although less violent in its charges against the West, continues to attack the United States for its aggressive plans, its policy of force. The fact that the volume and intensity of these charges has varied greatly indicates that to a large extent they have been influenced by tactical considerations. Discussions of the U.S. policy of force have been counterbalanced by claims of disunity among the Western allies, claims which have generally varied in volume in direct relation to evidences of real Western disagreements. The major exception to this generalization was the remarkable stress on Western disunity following the Berlin riots of June 1953. The concentration of this material in broadcasts to Communist audiences appeared calculated to reassure the Orbit that any weakness in the Bloc (Beria purge and riots) was matched by weakness in the West resulting from disunity.

The following factors suggest that, despite continued concern over Western aggressive plans, the USSR does not feel imminently threatened, and will pursue above all its effort to split the Western alliance. (1) Malenkov's reversions in his 26 April speech to the formula that a third world war would result in the destruction of the capitalist system after having said in March that a "new war would mean the destruction of world civilization. (2) The current balancing of charges of U.S. intervention in Indochina by assertions of Western disunity and claims of DRV successes, implying the failure of the U.S. policy of force. (3) The failure to utilize the U.S. Administration's "new look" in military policy in tension-building propaganda to any considerable degree. (4) Lack of extensive propaganda exploitation

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for recent protest notes. While notes protesting U.S. bases, activities, and projected defense arrangements in the post-Stalin period have been transmitted to Greece (October, March), Turkey (July, March), Pakistan (November, March) and the Netherlands (March), the publicity given them has been much less than similar notes during Stalin's reign, particularly in the fall of 1951. The notes have also usually been couched in more moderate language and have utilized new techniques. For example, the notes to Turkey (July) regarding foreign vessels in the Straits, and that to Pakistan (November) on U.S.-Pakistan negotiations asked merely for "clarification." Whereas previous notes on bases and alliances usually charged that the Soviet Union was being threatened, this is not spelled out in current ones, which use the new formulation that the threat is first of all to neighboring countries in an apparent effort to stimulate disunity in the non-Communist camp. (5) The fact that the increase in attention to U.S. bases initiated last October (with the Colonel Tolchenov series, broadcast largely in the home service) was not sustained, indicates a limited tactical objective for this propaganda offensive, either supporting the introduction of the bases issue in the then proposed Four Power meeting, or as a consequence of the Adenauer victory in the September West German elections in preparation for demand for United Nations discussion of the issue.

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F. Middle East Defense (II B 5)*

What is the Soviet estimate of U.S. intentions with respect to Near Eastern and Asian defense arrangements?

1. The increased volume and intensified denunciation of defensive arrangements in the Middle East following the announcement of U.S. military aid to Pakistan and the Turkish-Pakistani pact may be a measure of Soviet concern that the pact will be expanded to include other Middle East states.
2. Recent deviations from the normal propaganda pattern such as the criticism of individual Iraqi political leaders suggest that the Soviet Union recognizes Iraq as the most likely and imminent participant in the Turkish-Pakistani Alliance.
3. The consistent concentration in the Persian language of propaganda on the dire effects of participation in the Turkish-Pakistani alliance and on the threats to Iranian territory posed by both Turkey and Pakistan, coupled with the fact that there has been no deviation from standard propaganda regarding Iran as there has regarding Iraq, suggests that the USSR does not regard Iran's adherence to Western plans as assured.
4. Beginning with the first reports of U.S. military aid to Pakistan and of Turkish-Pakistani pact negotiations, Soviet charges regarding the aggressive nature of Western intentions have been increasingly explicit and detailed. These charges, centering as they do on the threats to Soviet security, have also resulted in a marked modification of the traditional propaganda posture of the Soviet Union as a neutral observer of Middle East affairs.
5. While there was very little propaganda exploitation of such gestures as the Soviet withdrawal of territorial claims on certain Turkish provinces and Malenkov's 8 August speech which spoke of the maintenance of "good neighborly relations," current comment includes gestures of Soviet support and friendship for the Middle East states.
6. Current material yields no indication of a Soviet proposal for Middle East collective security such as that suggested for Europe. Development of this tactic would likely be signaled by the appearance in the Soviet Home Service of positive material such as gestures of Soviet friendship and support.

* This section consists of the preliminary conclusions of a Radio Propaganda Report, "Soviet Propaganda on Plans for Middle East Defense," being issued 5 May 1954.

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7. Propaganda on Anglo-American disunity, which has long been confined almost exclusively to the economic field in respect to the Middle East, does not evidence any campaign designed to exploit the theme of Western military or political disunity in terms of Near East defense.
8. As summarized above, the pattern of current Soviet propaganda relative to defense developments in the Middle East indicates increasing Soviet concern—although not to the degree evidenced with regard to the European Defense Community—over the possibility of Western success in the creation of a formal Middle East defense organization.

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G. Massive Retaliation (II B 7)

What is the Soviet estimate of the determination and ability of the United States to use "massive retaliatory power" against further Bloc aggression?

The first major Soviet reaction, an indirect one, to Secretary Dulles' 12 January speech on massive retaliatory power is unique in the whole history of postwar Soviet propaganda for its stress on Soviet power of retaliation. Although developing this theme only by implication and without belligerence or excitement, the author, a "Retired General," reiterates in paragraph after paragraph that America is no longer invulnerable to retaliatory attack. America's allies will also find themselves in "theaters of military operations," in which weapons of mass destruction "will descend with all their power."

The commentary, taken from IZVESTIA, was widely broadcast to Europe and the Middle East, as well as to North America, and was not followed up with similar propaganda material. This handling of it suggests that it was addressed primarily to West European and the U.S. governments. If it had been intended for the Communist elite abroad, one would expect it to have appeared in PRAVDA or to have been transmitted by TASS, a channel for Party communications used for example in connection with Duclos' arrest in 1951.

That Moscow intended the commentary as a warning to Western elites is also indicated by its very content. The retaliation theme is rigorously avoided in propaganda practice, and even Soviet military strength, present or past, is not often discussed, particularly in foreign broadcasts. Thus for example RED STAR articles, even on political subjects, are rarely broadcast abroad; comment on Soviet military anniversaries in the past few years has been largely confined to Bloc audiences with Western audiences hearing descriptions of holiday crowds on these occasions.

Violation of this established practice suggests that the Soviet leaders had serious reasons for assuming the liability of quite direct threat-mongering. Doubtless the objective in broadcasting the item to North America was to warn this Government of the consequences of the policy* while the objective in Europe was to play on the fear of these

* After terming the policy of strength a means of aggression for enslaving "weak countries," the General in Retirement goes on: "The instigators of the policy of strength quite obviously neglect the fact that in relations between independent and powerful states this policy cannot be successful.... Historical experience shows convincingly that a one-sided use of the policy of strength in international relations cannot but result in the resistance on the part of those against whom this policy is directed. And it happens frequently that the force of this resistance turns out to be more powerful—with all the consequences which it produces."

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consequences and thus to further the isolation of the United States. While the latter objective is not new, this attempt to pursue it fits in with Soviet propaganda and political moves (such as the offer to join NATO) since the Berlin Conference which seems to indicate a Soviet estimate that chances of effecting such a split are good, or at least significantly better than previously. While the whole pattern of Soviet postwar propaganda seems to show conviction that the United States would use the atomic weapon if pressed, the Soviet estimate of U.S. ability to bring its allies into line in this respect may be more cheerful.

The implications for Soviet policy in the completely unprecedented current effort by RED STAR to acquaint its readers with the minimum facts on atomic explosion are ambiguous. This new effort, at least in its later stages, violated one of Moscow's most rigid propaganda policies, that of completely omitting descriptive details on the results of nuclear explosions, probably to avoid aggravating popular fear of war.

Although these articles have been confined to a paper whose audience is primarily military and to regional broadcasts for Soviet troops, it must have been calculated that they would reach the civilian masses too. Since the information might have been conveyed to the military orally in order to meet educational goals without stirring up the public, it must be supposed that a more general audience was a deliberate indirect target.

This change of psychological policy on atomic information may have been occasioned

- (1) by the need to present factual information on matters which had become the subject of rumor perhaps more frightening than the facts;
- (2) by the conviction of the leaders that the establishment of nuclear weapon controls is more important than any other item of Soviet policy and the advisability of propaganda preparation for earnest negotiation and concessions;
- (3) by abandonment of hope for nuclear weapon controls and the need to prepare for eventual atomic war.

Soviet participation in the current and considerable Bloc campaign against the H-bomb has been limited and cautious, however, very little use has been made of the opportunity to indulge in scaremongering.

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